

Book reviews

Under Antarctic Ice

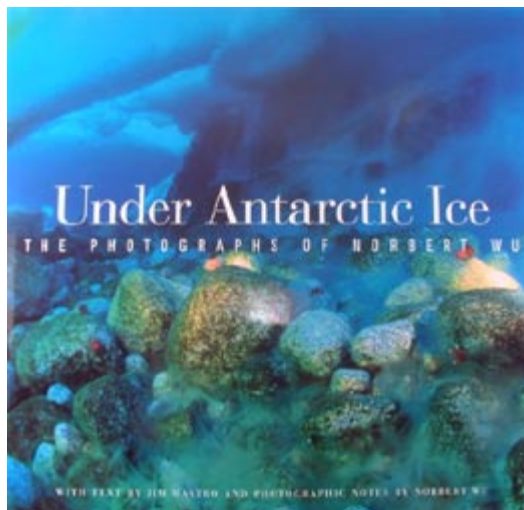
Under Antarctic Ice is a large 11"x10" (28x25cm) coffee table book written by Jim Mastro and illustrated by Norbert Wu.

Jim first went to Antarctica in 1982 and stayed there for six years ending up as the diving coordinator for the US Antarctic Program. Norbert is an independent filmmaker and photographer. In 1999 he was awarded a Pew Marine Conservation Fellowship Prize which he used to return to Antarctica in 2003 to continue his work in both stills and high-definition video.

The book is split into three main sections. The first, written by Jim, describes the natural history of the area and this is a captivating read about an area that is the size of the United States and Mexico combined.

The second section takes up the majority of the book and consists of Norbert's world class images with detailed and informative captions which make this book one you can immerse yourself in or dip into every now and again.

The photographs are, without doubt, astounding and a great deal of extreme physical discomfort and hard work must have gone into producing



such consistent quality. The captions reveal Norbert's expert knowledge of both his surroundings and his subjects and will leave you much better informed and inspired.

The final section is photographic notes relating to all the images and these give a fascinating insight into life behind the lens. Once again they are very detailed and most generously impart Norbert's knowledge and experience of how to operate in such environments.

Underwater Antarctic Ice is extremely good value at around £26 in the UK but be warned. If you buy this book as a present for somebody, you will probably end up keeping it.

For more details of Norbert's work visit www.norbertwu.com

An Essential Guide to Digital Underwater Photography

by Michael Aw and Mathieu Meur

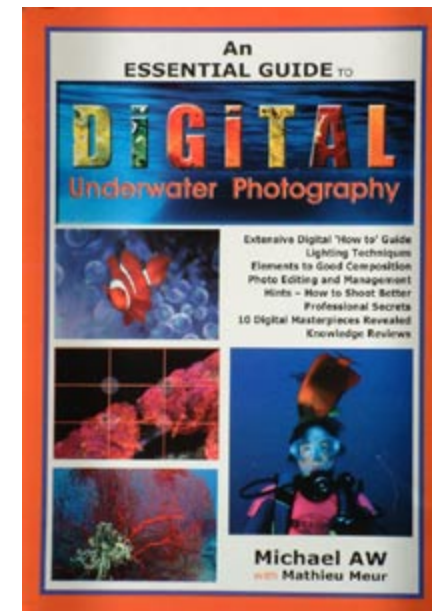
This 128 page book is like the Tardis. It seems small from the outside (approx 8" x 6", 21cm x 15cm) but inside it contains a wealth of information about underwater photography in general and digital in particular.

Initially I thought it was not going into enough detail but then I realised they were imparting salient points without flowery descriptions or explanations and sometimes, especially with digital, a longer explanation can be more confusing than a concise one.

The result is a master of simplicity and is very well illustrated with photos and diagrams. Also the flow of the book is very logical.

As a true convert to digital I was looking forward to the final section on Photoshop which is a programme so large and so multi-layered that I doubt if I will ever use more than 10% of its capability. Once again this section of the book was excellent for it only talked about those parts of Photoshop which are directly relevant to underwater photographers.

I'm sure other more copious books will come along in the future but I think Messrs Aw and Meur have got the balance just right first



time. They cater for beginners and advanced alike without talking up or down to either and, for once, the title of the book couldn't be more apt.

It is an essential guide which will accompany me on my travels from now on.

The Essential Guide to Digital Underwater Photography costs \$25 and is available at www.underwater.com.au/product.php/id/UWS001 and it should be available in most good underwater photography shops.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

In-depth photography portfolio with trade secrets revealed, Best Dive Sites

Rated as the Best underwater photography magazine in the Asia Pacific

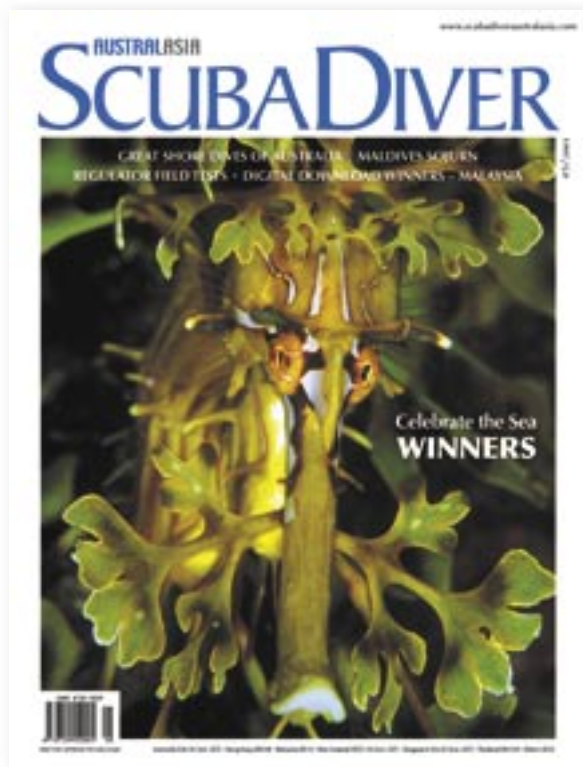


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